

# ***RVACT*** *Rogue Valley Area Commission on Transportation*

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**To:** Members, Rogue Valley Area Commission on Transportation

**From:** Kathy Helmer, RVCOG

**Re:** Summary of July 12, 2005, RVACT Meeting, Jackson County Auditorium

**Date:** July 13, 2005

**Members and Alternates in Attendance:** Arthur Anderson, ODOT; David Gilmour and Dale Petrasek, Jackson County; Ann Seltzer, Ashland; Jim Raffenberg and Robert Weber, Josephine Co.; Tom Humphrey, Central Point; Skip Knight, Medford; Marian Telerski, Talent; Bill Leep, Jacksonville; Sherry Young, Gold Hill; Rich Fahey, Grants Pass; Michael Quilty, MPO Policy; Craig Stone, Alan De Boer, Reeve Hennion, Stacey Kellenbeck, Mike Montero, Richard Smith and Jeff Hunter, private sector representatives from Jackson and Josephine Counties.

**Members Absent:** Butte Falls; Cave Junction; Eagle Point; Phoenix; Rogue River; RVTD; Shady Cove.

**Staff:** Mike Baker, Paul Mather and Gary Leaming, ODOT; Kathy Helmer, RVCOG.

**Other:** David Patterson, private sector, Josephine Co.; Kay Harrison, Central Point City Council; Steve Hodge, Josephine Co. Public Works.

## **1. Roll Call**

Co-Chair Mike Montero asked all participants to introduce themselves. A quorum was present.

## **2. Approval of Minutes**

Members requested no corrections to the minutes of the May 2005 meeting. A motion to accept the minutes as written was passed unanimously.

## **3. Public Input**

There was no public comment.

#### **4. RVACT By-Laws**

Art Anderson referred members to the handout on the revised by-laws. The main changes were to the third paragraph on page 3. They concerned the identification of private sector community members for participation in RVACT. This happens in a different way in each county. After some discussion, it was decided to substitute the word “selected” for the word “endorsed” in that paragraph. On page 4, the ability to call special meetings, out of the regular meeting cycle, had been included. Mike Montero noted that he had spoken with the OTC regarding by-laws changes and he had been told that it was within the group’s purview to make such changes. It was suggested that the group maintain its flexibility, since that seemed to be related to its success. Jim Raffenburg stated that he did not want to see the Equity Resolution overlooked. Alan De Boer moved, and Rich Fahey seconded, the acceptance of the by-laws as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **5. 2008 -2011 Draft STIP Criteria**

Mike Baker presented information on the Eligibility and Prioritization Factors for the upcoming STIP, referring to the technical document provided in the meeting packet. Mike noted that the main change in the framework for modernization projects was the new importance of projects supporting freight mobility. He noted that the amended Highway Plan designates Highways 62 and 140 as freight routes. Thus, projects on those highways will receive extra points. Art advised members not to be discouraged by the criteria. They should look at the recent, urgent TSP projects that have gotten successfully through the process. They should focus on what the region needs.

#### **6. West Coast MPO Meeting**

Mike Quilty reported on the meeting of the Executive Committee of the West Coast Corridor Coalition. He emphasized that this was not an MPO meeting. Meeting minutes were provided as handouts. The Committee includes 5 members from each of the four states in the Coalition, namely, Alaska, California, Oregon and Washington. The group aims to work for increased funding for transportation issues on the West Coast. ODOT is currently not participating in this Coalition, although other state departments of transportation are. ODOT seems to have questions regarding the intentions of the Coalition, ODOT’s role in shaping the group, and sovereignty issues related to how funds come to the state. ODOT received legal advice that its participation did not seem to fall within ORS guidelines. Alan De Boer suggested that ODOT was being prudent, since it had been criticized in the past for going beyond its mission. Skip Knight suggested that the Coalition engage Oregon’s Senators and Representatives in Washington, D.C. Mike Quilty said there had been discussions with them.

#### **7. Transportation Planning Rule (TPR) Update**

Mike Baker presented information on the Proposed Administrative Rule Amendments for OAR 660, Division 012, Transportation Rule. He spoke to several specific changes. One provision is that zone changes should not result in the worsening of a facility’s performance. He noted that previously, a failing facility had to be put into the TSP. Now a minor transportation improvement can be required as part of development. All in all, the revisions tie funding and planning together to ensure that impacts are taken care of within the planning period. Art Anderson said that an interpretive document is being prepared that will help people understand and use the rule. He will bring that document to RVACT upon its completion. Mike Montero noted that the TPR was the Land Conservation and Development Commission’s (LCDC’s) rule; it does not come from

ODOT. He noted that the revised rule allows communities to satisfy urban changes, so long as they are tied to transportation changes over a longer period of time.

## **8. OTC Meeting in Medford**

Art Anderson explained that the OTC was to have a retreat from October 18 – 19 in Medford. RVACT will be presenting its biennial report to the OTC at that time. It will be along the lines of the SWACT report provided in the meeting packet. RVACT members will have the opportunity to review the draft report.

## **9. Break**

## **10. Local Construction Projects**

Gary Leaming presented a PowerPoint presentation on all the ongoing construction projects in the region. The N. Medford Interchange NB off-ramp opened on July 7. The Depot St. Bridge will be moved in December and traffic should be on it by September. The I-5 Central Point SB off ramp is close to being finished. The I-5 N. Ashland to S. Medford project will be completed by the end of August. The Fern Valley Interchange Environmental Assessment is progressing well. Four bridges are slated for work on Highway 199; work has started on two of the southern bridges. The Bybee Corner project will entail the realignment of the adjoining creek.

## **11. Financial Overview/Equity Briefing**

Art Anderson used a PowerPoint presentation to present an analysis of the allocation of past and future funding between Jackson and Josephine. The analysis took into consideration all types of funds/projects. Art stressed that the RVACT controls funds for only the modernization projects. The targeted 70/30 percent funding split is based on population. Earmarks and the OTIA programs led to a spike in funds being spent in Jackson Co. There has been a recent drop off in all funds going to the two counties. The analysis shows that a gap still exists between the two counties in the area of modernization projects. There needs to be continued focus on the equity issue with respect to modernization project funds. Overall, taking into account all types of projects, balance has been achieved between the two counties. Mike Montero noted that the RVACT would do its best to support the equity resolution, but that the OTC is the actual decision-making body. RVACT is an advisory board to the OTC. Final decisions about funding are made by the OTC, so RVACT has only so much influence over the split. When there are few modernization funds, the OTC must determine how to get the greatest return for its investment.

## **12. South Medford Interchange**

The increase in projected cost for the S. Medford Interchange project was recently featured in the Mail Tribune. Art Anderson made a presentation to members on the \$18 million increase, explaining that 33% of the increase was due to design items identified as the project proceeded through the process, and 67% was due to an increase in materials, land, fuel and the scarcity of concrete. RVACT must grapple with how to cover the \$18 million deficit. Art shared a set of options for covering the costs and asked members for their reactions.

One member asked if the project could be phased; Art responded that interchanges are quite difficult to phase. Mike Quilty suggested using the Fern Valley Interchange model, whereby the developers who will benefit from an improvement are asked to contribute to the cost. Skip Knight said that the existing \$15 million local match for the S. Medford Interchange was

comprised of \$5 million from the Medford Urban Renewal Agency, \$5 million from the City of Medford, and \$5 million from System Development Charges (SDCs). He said it was out of the question to increase the amount of local match. Reallocating funds from other high dollar projects might work. Craig Stone said that federal case law (Dolan vs. the City of Tigard) provides the basis for requesting funds from developers to offset the impact. It would help determine their proportional share. Marian Telerski supported looking at the options of moving STIP projects to out-years and reallocating dollars from other high priority projects. She said that it was difficult to determine where to draw the boundary line for additional SDCs. Tom Humphrey suggested that it would be good for the region to develop a consistent philosophy on how to fund these large projects. Stacy Kellenbeck said that it would be good to look at Medford's SDCs in relation to other cities' SDCs. In Grants Pass, they found that development would go on, despite the cost of higher SDCs. At this time, earmarks are a very small part of the overall funding package for the S. Medford Interchange. Mike Quilty spoke about how the boom in Chinese construction is causing a spike in materials' costs. Dave Gilmour said that he would not want to delay Highway 62, since the growth in population was creating a real traffic problem. Stacy Kellenbeck said it would be good to see the minutes from the meeting when RVACT approved moving ahead with the S. Medford Interchange project, to see if the project still was in line with members' intent.

Art Anderson said that members would receive a well-developed set of options for discussion at the September meeting, including ideas for capturing the funds from STIP projects, reallocations and local match. This document will be sent out three weeks before the meeting, so that people may get their comments to Art before the meeting.

Alan De Boer said that maybe people should go back and ask if they were wrong to decide to move ahead with the S. Medford Interchange project. They made a decision at \$36 million; is that decision still valid at \$70 million?

### **13. Josephine County Private Representative**

Jim Raffenburg said that he had discussed representatives with Laurel Samson of Grants Pass. The County is speaking with Cave Junction and Grants Pass later this week to make sure they can send representatives to the next meeting. If they cannot, the County will provide the necessary representatives.

### **14. OTC Update**

Paul Mather reported that the OTC would be meeting the following week. One of the issues to be discussed is the I-5 crossing of the Columbia River. The current OTC Director is moving on to another job; the Governor will select a new Director. At the state level, House action on Connect Oregon is being held up by issues with the education budget. In Washington, the reauthorization process continues; they have apparently settled on a total \$286.5 billion budget, but they are still juggling earmarks. Mike Montero asked if there might be any opportunities for fund exchange within Region 3. Paul said that we could "borrow" from the Southwest ACT, but our modernization funds have decreased so much that we would not be talking a great deal of money.

## **15. Agenda Build**

Before moving to the next meeting's agenda, Art referred members to the handout on the Discretionary Grant Program and explained that projects for RVTD would serve the region. Skip Knight suggested that a list of acronyms would be very useful, since there were many new members.

Agenda items for the next meeting will include:

- Update on the S. Medford Interchange
- Update on the STIP
- Interpretation of the TPR
- Draft Report to the OTC
- List of Acronyms
- Josephine County private sector representatives

## **16. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 AM.